

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 05940 211950Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 HA-05 /066 W
-----118171 220237Z /63

R 202053Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8859
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 5940

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, HO, NU
SUBJECT: COUP PLOTTER "CONFESSES": NICARAGUAN INVOLVEMENT AGAIN
CLAIMED

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 5699, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 5468

1. IN A SERIES OF LENGTHY INTERVIEWS PUBLISHED IN LA PRENSA
DECEMBER 10, 12 AND 13 MANUEL ANTONIO PADILLA BULNES GAVE
WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS COMPLETE, VOLUNTARY DESCRIPTION OF
ALLEGED COUP PLOT, ITS GENESIS AND END. (COPIES BEING POQ
HED
ARA/CEN AND MANAGUA.) PADILLA IS THE BROTHER OF LUIS
ANTONIO PADILLA BULNES AND UNCLE OF ARMY SERGEANT LUIS
ANTONIO PADILLA QUAN, ALL THREE OF WHOM WERE ARRESTED FOR
THEIR PART IN ALLEGED COUP PLOT. IN INTRODUCTORY NOTE
PADILLA CLAIMED HE PREVIOUSLY HAD NO INTENTION OF COMMENTING ON THE
CASE, BUT THAT THE CHARGES HE AND HIS BROTHER WERE PLANNING
NOTHING MORE THAN A SWINDLE FORCED HIM TO GIVE A DETAILED
HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT (REF. B).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 05940 211950Z

2. SALIENT POINTS OF ARTICLE WERE:--THE PLOT ORIGINATED
WITH SOME ARMY SERGEANTS WHO BROUGHT IN THE CIVILIANS
THROUGH CONTACT WITH PADILLA QUAN AND HIS FATHER; --BECAUSE
OF LACK OF FUNDS (PADILLA CLAIMS THEY COLLECTED AND SPENT
LESS THAN \$1500) THE PLOTTERS CONTACTED THE NICARAGUAN
CONSUL AND MILITARY ATTACHE WHO TRAVELLED TO MIAMI AND
RETURNED WITH A PROMISE FROM SOMOZA OF \$50,000.

--SOMOZA'S SUPPORT WAS TO BE GIVEN IN RETURN FOR THE PLOTTERS' PROMISE THAT IF SUCCESSFUL THE MOVEMENT WOULD "DEFINITELY CONTROL THE SANDINISTAS WHO OPERATE IN HONDURAS, ESPECIALLY IN THEIR SANCTUARY, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY." --IN DESCRIBING RECRUITMENT OF PLOTTERS, PADILLA RELATES HOW A NUMBER OF OTHERS WERE BROUGHT IN AND MENTIONS HERNAN CASTRO COELLO AND FRANCICO BARON LUPIAC "WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN INVOLVED IN A COUP

KTTEMPT WHICH LT. COL. MARIO MALDONADO, THE EX-DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE, WAS TO HAVE DIRECTED." (COMMENT: EMBASSY IS AWARE OF NO COUP ATTEMPTS INVOLVING MALDONADO WHO HAS BEEN ON ASSIGNMENT IN THE U.S. SINCE MID-1975.) --SOMOZA NEVER SENT THE PROMISED MONEY AND PADILLA BELIEVES BOTH SOMOZA AND ARMY SERGEANT RENE GALEANO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR REVEALING PLOT TO GOH AUTHORITIES. --ONE ARTICLE WAS GIVEN OVER TO A LENGTHY LISTING OF WHO WOULD OCCUPY WHAT JOBS (FOLLOWED IN MOST CASES BY A DISCLAIMER THAT THE PERSON INVOLVED WAS AWARE OF THE PLOT), AND A DESCRIPTION OF HOW TEGUCIGALPA WAS TO BE TAKEN IN 15 MINUTES BY OCCUPATION OF THE NATIONAL STADIUM AND HIGH BUILDINGS..

--LT. COL. ROLANDO MEJIA GARIDO WAS MENTIONED AS HAVING BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE PLOTTERS, BUT PADILLA LEFT UNCLEAR WHETHER IT WAS MEJIA THE SERGEANTS WERE REFERRING TO WHEN THEY CLAIMED TO HAVE OFFICER SUPPORT OR WHETHER MEJIA WAS INVOLVED WITH THEM.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 05940 211950Z

3. TEN OF THE ALLEGED COUP PLOTTERS IMMEDIATELY PUBLISHED A CATEGORICAL DENIAL OF PADILLA'S CLAIMS. LA TRIBUNA IN A HUMOROUS EDITORIAL CALLED THE WHOLE COUP ATTEMPT "PICTURESQUE" AND THANKED PADILLA FOR PROVIDING SOME AMUSEMENT DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON. THE EDITORIAL PARTICULARLY NOTED THE GOUPS' LACK OF PEOPLE AND MONEY, ITS PLAN TO OCCUPY THE CITY IN ONLY 15 MINUTES AND ITS PROPOSED FIRST DECREES: ONE CALLING FOR ELECTIONS AND THE OTHER MAKING CORPUS CHRISTI A NATIONAL HOLIDAY. SIMON MOLINA REPEATED HIS CHARGES THAT THE WHOLE AFFAIR WAS A "CON GAME" AND PADILLA AGAIN DENIED THIS.

4. COMMENT: PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLES AND THE TRIBUNA EDITORIAL SEEM TO BE THE END OF THIS MATTER, ALTHOUGH CHARGE AND COUNTER-CHARGE MAY CONTINUE. SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION IN PADILLA'S ACCOUNT IS IMPOSSIBLE. EVEN AFTER READING THE ARTICLES IT SEEMS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THE PLOTTERS MIGHT HAVE BEEN SERIOUS. THERE WAS NEVER ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT PADILLA WOULD HAVE PROVIDED THIS INTERVIEW WITHOUT SOME GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, PERHAPS ARRANGED BEFORE THE AMNESTY. THE GOH, IN THE FACE OF WIDESPREAD

PUBLIC DISBELIEF, WOULD HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO SEE "CONFIRMATION"
BY ONE OF THE ACCUSED THAT THERE REALLY WAS A PLOT, AS WELL
AS THE SPECULATION THAT SOMOZA IN THE END DID NOT TAKE PJET
IN THE ATTEMPT. CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE HONDURAN
MILITARY MIGHT AGREE THAT THE SOMOZA QUID PRO QUO, CONTROL
OF SANDINISTAS, WAS A LEGITIMATE REQUEST AND WOULD WELCOME
THE REFERENCE TO LT. COL. MALDONADO'S COUP ACTIVITIES AND
LT. COL. MEJIA, WHO IS REPORTEDLY ALSO VIEWED AS A PROGRESSIVE.
PERHAPS IN ORDER TO CLEAR HIS NAME PADILLA EMPHASIZED THE SMALL AMOUN
T
OF MONEY THE GROUP HAD. YET THIS ONLY SHOWS HOW FAR FROM
REALITY THE PLOTTERS WERE. IF THE OFFER WAS EVER MADE,
SOMOZA'S COLD FEET MAY HAVE COME ABOUT BECAUSE HE
REALIZED THIS--OR BECAUSE HE MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEGUCI 05940 211950Z

THE MONEY WOULD NEVER BE SEEN AGAIN.
JARAMILLO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, PLOTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TEGUCI05940
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770476-0996
Format: TEL
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771234/aaaabcna.tel
Line Count: 138
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5a53cbff-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEGUCIGALPA 5699, 77 TEGUCIGALPA 5468
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 164886
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COUP PLOTTER \\"CONFESSES\\": NICARAGUAN INVOLVEMENT AGAIN CLAIMED
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, HO, NU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5a53cbff-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009